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DE RUEHDJ #0513 1630758
ZNY CCCCC ZZH
O 110758Z JUN 08
FM AMEMBASSY DJIBOUTI
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 9299
INFO RUCNIAD/IGAD COLLECTIVE IMMEDIATE
RUEHAE/AMEMBASSY ASMARA IMMEDIATE 2304
RUEHFR/AMEMBASSY PARIS IMMEDIATE 0985
RUEHRO/AMEMBASSY ROME IMMEDIATE 0512
RHMFISS/CJTF HOA IMMEDIATE
RUEKDIA/DIA WASHDC IMMEDIATE
RUEAIIA/CIA WASHDC IMMEDIATE

C O N F I D E N T I A L DJIBOUTI 000513

SIPDIS

DEPARTMENT FOR AF, AF/E, IO, AND INR/GGI
LONDON, PARIS, ROME FOR AFRICA WATCHER
CJTF-HOA FOR POLAD

E.O. 12958: DECL: 06/10/2013
TAGS: [PREL](#) [PBTS](#) [MOPS](#) [PHSA](#) [ER](#) [AU](#) [DJ](#)
SUBJECT: SUBJECT: ONE SHOT FIRED ON DJIBOUTI-ERITREA BORDER

REF: A. A. DJIBOUTI 508
[1](#)B. B. DJIBOUTI 482 (AND PREVIOUS)

Classified By: Classified By: Chargee d'Affaires a.i. Kathleen List for reasons 1.4 b, d.

[1](#)1. (C) ON JUNE 9, CDA MET BRIEFLY WITH FRENCH AMBASSADOR TO DJIBOUTI DECHERF TO DISCUSS THE FRENCH POSITION ON THE DJIBOUTI-ERITREA BORDER. DECHERF STATED THAT FRANCE HAD BEEN IN CONTACT WITH THE ERITREANS TO REMIND THEM, IF THEY NEEDED REMINDING, THAT FRANCE HAD A TREATY OBLIGATION TO PROTECT THE SOVERIGNTY OF DJIBOUTI. HE SAID, CURIOUSLY, THAT ERITREA HAD NO AGGRESSIVE INTENT AGAINST DJIBOUTI.

[1](#)2. (C) AT 1415 ON JUNE 10, OUR CONSULAR OFFICER RECEIVED A CALL FROM A CONTACT IN THE CAPITAL CITY OF DJIBOUTI, WHO CLAIMED THAT FIGHTING HAD BROKEN OUT ON THE DJIBOUTI-ERITREA BORDER. CDA CONTACTED DECHERF, WHO RETURNED THE CALL AT 1430 INDICATING THAT HIS FRENCH MILITARY HAD REPORTED THAT AN ERITREAN SOLDIER HAD FIRED ONE SHOT AT AN ERITREAN ATTEMPTING TO DESERT; HE DID NOT SAY IF THE DESERTER WAS INJURED OR KILLED IN THE EVENT AND ON WHICH SIDE OF THE BORDER THE EVENT OCCURRED. DECHERF FURTHER REPORTED THAT CALM HAD NOW RETURNED. OTHER SOURCES WE CONTACTED HAVE ALSO CONFIRMED THAT THE BORDER AREA IS QUIET.

[1](#)3. (C) COMMENT: DJIBOUTIANS WITH WHOM WE HAVE TALKED IN THE CAPITAL PLACE THE TENSIONS AT THE BORDER AS THEIR HIGHEST PREOCCUPATION, PARTICULARLY THE AFAR PEOPLE WHO SUFFERED SEVERELY IN THIS NORTHERN REGION DURING THE CIVIL WAR AND STILL WITNESS THE INFRASTRUCTURE DAMAGE DAILY. IT IS COMMONLY BELIEVED THAT, ABSENT FRENCH INTERVENTION, ANY SERIOUS CONFRONTATION AT THE BORDER BETWEEN THE ERITREAN AND DJIBOUTIAN MILITARIES WOULD RESULT IN A DEFEAT OF THE DJIBOUTIANS, WITH THE ERITREANS GAINING CONTROL OF RAS DOUMEIRA AND FROM WHICH IT WOULD BE DIFFICULT TO UNSEAT WITH NEGOTIATION. THIS CONFLICT STANDS IN SHARP CONTRAST TO THE ROLE OF "HONEST BROKER" THAT DJIBOUTI IS TRYING TO PLAY IN REGIONAL PEACE TALKS, WITNESS THE SUCCESSFUL CONCLUSION TO THE SOMALI PEACE TALKS ON JUNE 9 (SEPTTEL).
LIST